



Commons Board Meeting - Council Chambers, City Hall
November 13th, 2013
11:30 am EST

The Commons Board met on Wednesday, November 13th, 2013 at 11:30 am (EST) in the Council Chambers at City Hall.

Board Members Present: Sherry Stark, Sharon Beach, Ryan Brand and Paige Harden

Others Present: Shanda Sasse, Jamie Brinegar, Ben Wagner, Jillian Keller, Steve Risting, Casey Ritz, Tami Sharp and Jeff Logston

Board President Sherry Stark welcomed everyone and brought to attention October 2013 Commons Board minutes for approval. Ryan Brand motioned to approve the October Board meeting minutes, Paige Harden seconded. Motion approved.

Sherry requested an update on the Subway signage and discussion of Board member terms be added to the agenda. Jamie Brinegar reported that he has not yet received a response from the Subway representative concerning the signage.

Jeff Logston provided the Loading Dock update. The easement has been approved. The Commons staff requested copies of the easement; Jeff Logston agreed to provide hard copies.

Steve Risting provided the architectural report. He stated the Performance Hall shades are now complete within the budget set with the Heritage Fund grant. Steve will make final observations of the trim pieces to confirm installation. Steve confirmed his payment is in process. Jamie Brinegar confirmed final payments to Dunlap and Dixie Light have been processed. Steve will follow up with Jamie to ensure the invoices and payments match.

Shanda provided the Commons report. She stated changes have been made to the rental contracts under guidance of City Attorney, Jeff Logston in hopes of eliminating confusion. The Commons staff has also created Event Rental Guidelines to distribute to after a rental contract is signed. The document includes information such as bathroom locations, parking, and loading dock guidance. Shanda will email the document to The Board.

Projected revenue for The Commons is currently at \$135,790.70 for 2014. After the Grant Funding, revenue is \$131,705.70.

Shanda reminded the Board of the updated holiday hours. The building will be closed on Thanksgiving and Christmas. Holiday hours (10:00 am – 6:00 pm) will be in effect on Christmas Eve and New Year's Day. The Commons office will be closed on Thanksgiving, Friday, November 29th, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, New Year's Eve and New Year's Day.

Holiday décor will be installed on Wednesday, November 20th. In addition to the holiday décor, The City of Columbus has obtained a second live tree donation for this year's downtown decorations. The blue spruce tree will be added to the sidewalk in front of The Commons. Casey Ritz stated the 12-15" tree should arrive on November 22nd.

Shanda also reported on December's new event at The Commons. The Christmas Village will take place inside The Commons on Saturday, December 7th, from 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm in correlation with the Festival of Lights parade. The event will include live entertainment acts, an interactive gingerbread village and a model train display.

Sharon Beach asked if the event could include other traditions such as Kwanza and Hanukkah and invite the CAMEO group. Shanda agreed to reach out and work within the time constraints for this year.

Shanda updated the Board in response to last month's discussion concerning Lower Lobby rentals. She made contact with 25 different corporate partner contacts representing 16 different companies that have held events in The Commons in the past year. The survey asked several questions regarding use and priority of the lower lobby included in their rental. Partners rated the reasoning for a Lower Lobby included in their rental. Majority stated the need for extra space was the most important aspect, most events hosted more than 100 guests and the pricing was satisfactory. Confidentially was also noted as an important element of the rental. Shanda stated she felt the Lower Lobby rentals should be reserved for corporate events only.

Jillian Keller, The Commons Administrative Assistant, stated the trial period for the new regulations has worked well over the past month. The Board agreed at the October meeting to no longer offer the lower lobby to weddings or birthday parties for rentals. She reported no major complaints over the weddings and birthday parties are simply moving to the playground to host the party for free.

Jeff Logston mentioned complaints might be an issue but the legal aspect should not be a problem differentiating between private events and corporate events. Sherry reiterated that The Board wants to be good partners with major organizations in town that are strong supporters of the community and users of The Commons.

Sharon stated that if rental priorities include confidentially, the space might have a higher value than what is being charged. She asked that The Board consider the market rates for the premium option The Commons provides.

Sherry Stark proposed continuation of the temporary policy and asked The Commons staff to consider a fee adjustment for a full rental after monitoring the progress of the policy. The Board agreed. The Commons staff will report back after a reasonable time working the new policy.

Jeff Logston reported that the Redevelopment Commission has authorized their attorney, Stan Gamzo, to continue contract negotiations with the new tenant for the current vacant retail space at The Commons. Redevelopment Commission has a regular meeting scheduled for Monday, November 11th, 2013. Jeff felt a document might be presented for approval at that meeting. That approval will be contingent upon approval by City Council which could occur in December.

Ryan Brand stated that the intent is for the new restaurant to be open by Saint Patrick's Day, Monday, March 17, 2014.

Ryan also provided the resolution for the second level display cases in The Commons. The document states that the desires of the Board are for the Mayor's office and CMAD to create guidelines to further curate the cases. The intent is to state that the curation is being delegated to CMAD and the corporation will be between The Commons Board, CMAD and the Mayor's office. Ryan moved to approve the resolution as presented. The majority of the quorum approved, Sharon Beach abstained. Motion carried.

Tami Sharp provided the Columbus Area Art's Council update. She noted 2014's scheduled events include First Friday's, Tim Grimm release concert, Martin Luther King Day, Neighborfest, Library Plaza kickoff, Block Party, Iron and Glass in conjunction with Art Fest, Art Break Day, Ethnic Expo and UnCommon Cause.

Sherry noted three members of The Commons Board; Sharon Beach, Paige Harden and George Dutro's terms expire at the end of the calendar year. Sherry asked Jeff Logston and Ryan Brand to relay to the Mayor and Council that the Board has been extremely pleased with their activity.

Sherry reminded the Board that there is no December Board meeting. The next meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 8th, 2014. Sherry requested that Board members also consider the elections of President and Vice President for The Commons Board in January.

Jamie added that The Commons staff is working with Columbus City Garage street department and Engineering to take over the operation of the 4th Street gates. The hope is to put forth input concerning events scheduled at The Commons in conjunction with 4th St. events.

Meeting adjourned.

Next Meeting: Wednesday, January 8th, 2014.